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PRESS RELEASE

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European Union Renewables Funding for North-East Scotland communities



European partners are meeting this week in Strathpeffer to discuss a new funding opportunity for communities in North-East Scotland.

The SMALLEST programme is designed to extend the potential for communities interested in renewable energy in the region.

Hosting the meeting are the Scottish Lead Partner, International Resources and Recycling Institute, and fellow Scottish partners, Inverness College, and PURE Energy Centre, from Shetland. Andrew

Leaver of Inverness College is delighted that such an important EU programme should choose to visit the region: "This is incredibly important for our communities. We are already working hard to encourage renewable energy in our region, and the support offered by the Northern Periphery Programme, funded by the European Union, is an endorsement of everything we are doing."

The Lead Partner in the project is also Scottish. Nick Lyth, of International Resources and Recycling Institute, explains why: "I think a Scottish Lead Partner is especially relevant for this Northern Periphery Programme, because the Scottish Government is already doing so much good work for the future of renewables among rural communities. Its work in the North-East is exemplary."

During their visit, partners will be meeting local company, Community Energy Scotland, based in Dingwall. CES is considered to be leading Europe in the renewable energy advisory service it supplies to communities. Chief Executive, Nicholas Gubbins says: "It is a pleasure to welcome the SMALLEST programme to the region. This is evidence of the EU's commitment to the cause that we in Scotland have pursued for the last ten years. Community renewable energy is the grass roots of energy usage. We have to get it right, and, thanks to the CARES programme funded by Scottish Government, as well as HIE's programme in the Highlands & Islands, Community Energy Scotland is able to help make this happen."

Partners in SMALLEST will be visiting the community of Alness, which has already converted to renewable energy in a variety of initiatives supported by CES. They will also be hearing from CES about its plans and systems for encouraging renewable energy use in Scottish

communities. The meeting is being held at the Pavilion in Strathpeffer on Tuesday and Wednesday, 15th/16th June.

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For further information, contact Nick Lyth at International Resources and Recycling Institute on 07802 150053 or e-mail at nick.lyth@recycling-institute.org. Or Nicholas Gubbins at Community Energy Scotland on 01349 860120 or e-mail at nicholas.gubbins@communityenergyscotland.org.uk. You can also visit the SMALLEST website: www.smallestnpp.eu

Notes:

1. The SMALLEST project is being managed by International Resources and Recycling Institute on behalf of the Northern Periphery Programme, and includes Scottish partners, Inverness College and PURE Energy Centre, from Shetland.
2. SMALLEST is a project that started in 2009 that will end in June 2012. It is part-funded by the Northern Periphery Programme, which is itself part of the EU Interreg IVB. The Northern Periphery Programme 2007-2013 helps to build joint projects creating innovative products and services for the benefit of the programme partner countries and Europe as a whole.
3. SMALLEST is a service to help make renewable energy more accessible to the smallest communities in the most remote areas of Northern Europe.
4. Significant, untapped potential exists for the generation of renewable energy in small communities. Developing renewable energy solutions helps to enhance social, economic and environmental sustainability by diversifying small communities' resources. Renewable energy solutions can help isolated regions to become more self-sufficient, increasing their competitiveness and reducing vulnerability to external market influence. Currently a lack of knowledge and experience in the areas of renewable energy solutions is preventing small communities to reach their potential in renewable energy generation.
5. In SMALLEST partners from Scotland, Northern Ireland, Faroe Islands, Finland, Sweden, Iceland, Greenland, and Norway work together to enable rural communities throughout the Northern Periphery Programme (NPP) region access renewable energy solutions.

For further information, contact Nick Lyth on 07802 150053 or e-mail at nick.lyth@recycling-institute.org. You can also visit our website: www.smallestnpp.eu